

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

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INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

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AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

RUTALS/AMEMBASSY LAGOS 1964

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 18243

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, UK, RH

SUBJECT: AN FCO VIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN RHODESIA

REF: (A) LONDON 17903 (NOTAL); (B) LUSAKA 2241 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN'S SPECIAL ADVISER
ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS, DENNIS GRENNAN, IS NOT ESPECIALLY
OPTIMISTIC THAT A RHODESIAN SOLUTION IS AT HAND. HE BE-
LIEVES THAT TALKS COULD AGAIN BREAK DOWN OVER THE QUES-
TION OF THE TIMING OF A TRANSFER OF POWER. HE THINKS THE
FIGHTING IN ANGOLA COULD HAVE A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON
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SOUTH AFRICA'S DEDICATION TO DETENTE. THERE IS NO CHANGE

IN BRITISH POLICY, BUT THE QUESTION OF COMPENSATION FOR WHITE RHODESIANS WILL INEVITABLY BRING IN THE BRITISH AT AN EARLY STAGE IN SERIOUS TALKS. END SUMMARY.

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH DENNIS GRENNAN NOVEMBER 25, EMBASSY OFFICER ASKED HOW HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT VIEWED CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN RHODESIA. GRENNAN REPLIED THAT, ALTHOUGH WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE ZAMBIANS, THE BRITISH IN FACT HAVE NO SPECIAL INSIDE TRACK ON WHAT IS PRESENTLY TRANSPIRING IN SALISBURY. APPARENTLY JOSHUA NKOMO AND IAN SMITH HAVE PICKED UP THE PIECES DROPPED AT VICTORIA FALLS, BUT THE ROAD AHEAD REMAINS TORTUOUS AND OBSCURE. GRENNAN SAID THAT FOR TWO REASONS HE IS NOT NECESSARILY OPTIMISTIC AT THE PROSPECTS FOR A QUICKLY NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA. FIRST, THERE IS YET NO DEFINITION OF "IMMEDIATE" AS THAT WORD DESCRIBES MAJORITY RULE. HE FEARS A SIGNIFICANT CHASM SEPARATES BLACKS AND WHITES ON THE QUESTION OF HOW LONG A TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD LAST. SMITH WOULD SOONER RESIGN THAN AGREE TO MAJORITY RULE IN TWO OR THREE YEARS, GRENNAN SAID. NKOMO ON HIS SIDE, COULD NOT AVOID CHARGES OF A SELL-OUT UNLESS AN AGREEMENT PROVIDED FOR THE PROMPT TRANSFERRAL OF POWER. ON THE QUESTION OF TIMING, THE FOUR PRESIDENTS, ESPECIALLY NYERERE AND MACHEL, REMAIN SUSPICIOUS OF SMITH'S SINCERITY AND DOUBTFUL OF NKOMO'S TENACITY. SECOND, THE MASSIVE FOREIGN INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA IS NOW AN UNASSESSED FACTOR IN THE RHODESIAN EQUATION. FOR ENTIRELY DIFFERENT REASONS, BOTH SMITH AND NKOMO CAN ASK AN IDENTICAL QUESTION: "DO YOU WANT ANOTHER ANGOLA HERE?" HOW THE WHITE POPULATION OF RHODESIA PERCEIVES THE BEST WAY TO AVOID AN ANGOLAN ENCORE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA IS INCREASINGLY CRUCIAL TO A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. MOREOVER, IF THE MPLA, WITH ITS SOVIET AND CUBAN COMRADES, IS SUCCESSFUL IN HOLDING ON TO A SIGNIFICANT SHARE OF ANGOLA, THE CONSEQUENT RED SPECTER IN THE NORTH WOULD INEVITABLY DISSIPATE THE PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR DETENTE IN SOUTH AFRICA ON WHICH VORSTER HAS SO FAR RELIED. (AS AN ASIDE,

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GRENNAN MENTIONED THAT SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN MINISTER MULLER PRIVATELY REPEATED TO AN INCREDULOUS CALLAGHAN THE SAME DEAD-PAN DENIALS OF SOUTH AFRICAN INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA WHICH HE HAD DELIVERED TO A GUFFAWING AUDIENCE AT CHATHAM HOUSE ON NOVEMBER 20 (REFTEL A). IN SHORT, IF EVENTS IN ANGOLA SEEM LIKELY TO JEOPARDIZE STABILITY THROUGHOUT SOUTHERN AFRICA, THEN RHODESIANS AND SOUTH AFRICANS ALIKE WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO ENCOURAGE WHAT THEY REGARD AS THE SCUTTLE DIPLOMACY THAT CHARACTERIZED PORTUGAL'S DEPARTURE FROM ANGOLA.

2. EMBASSY OFFICER REPEATED CURRENT SPECULATION T/HAT AN
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ACTIVE BRITISH PARTICIPATION NOW IS ESSENTIAL IF RHODESIAN TALKS ARE TO SUCCEED, AND THAT WITH FOREIGN-TRAINED NATIONALIST GUERRILLAS ASSEMBLING ON RHODESIA'S FRONTIERS THE SMITH-NKOMO FORMULA COULD WELL BE THE LAST CHANCE FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. OFFICER ASKED WHETHER THESE NEW FACTORS HAD INDUCED BRITISH LEADERSHIP TO RECONSIDER ITS ARMS-LENGTH POSTURE ON RHODESIA. GRENNAN SAID BRITISH POLICY REMAINS UNALTERED, BUT THEN WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE BRITISH WOULD INEVITABLY BE DRAWN INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS ONCE SERIOUS TALKS GET UNDERWAY. HE SAID IT IS

INCONCEIVABLE THAT SMITH WOULD NEGOTIATE FOR MAJORITY RULE WITHOUT FIRST SEEKING COMMITMENTS FROM WHITEHALL ON THE QUESTIONS OF PENSION RIGHTS FOR WHITE RHODESIAN CIVIL SERVANTS AND COMPENSATION FOR SURRENDERED WHITE INVESTMENT. GRENNAN BELIEVES THE FORMER PROBLEM IS STRAIGHTFORWARD AND SIMPLY SOLVED, BUT THE LATTER QUESTION, HE SAID AS AN EXPRESSION OF ACUTE PAIN CROSSED HIS FACE, IS A FIELD OF THMRNS. COMPENSATION FOR FARM LAND ALONE -- FOLLOWING THE KENYA FORMULA -- WOULD BE AN IMMENSE BURDEN FOR A BRITISH TREASURY THAT IS ALREADY STAGGERING, BUT SMITH MIGHT TRY TO EXTEND THE PRINCIPLE TO COVER SMALL BUSINESSES, PPOJECTED LOST INCOME, AND MYRIAD OTHER FORMS OF REIMBURSEMENT. THESE LIKELY DEMANDS ON THE BRITISH BUDGET ARE NOW ONLY WHISPERED OF IN WHITEHALL, GRENNAN SAID, AND NO ONE HAS ATTEMPTED TO ESTIMATE A FINAL BILL. BUT, GRENNAN CONJECTURED, THESE CONSIDERATIONS WOULD BE PARAMOUNT IN SMITH'S MIND WHEN HE BEGINS TO NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY WITH THE NATIONALISTS, AND BRITISH PARTICIPATION AT AN EAPLY STAGE IS CONSEQUENTLY ASSURED. GRENNAN THEN GLOOMILY SPECULATED THAT SMITH MIGHT ADROITLY MANEUVER THE NEGOTIATIONS TO A STANDSTILL WHILE HE POINTED A FINGER AT THE LABOR GOVERNMENT IN LONDON FOR ITS UNWILLINGNESS OR INABILITY TO COVER THE JUST CLAIMS OF RHODESIAN SETTLERS.

3. COMMENT: EMBASSY OFFICER HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT WHILE THE BRITISH OFFICIALLY DENY ANY CHANGE IN THEIR PRESENT POLICY ON RHODESIA, THEY ARE IN FACT BECOMING MORE CONCERNED AND INVOLVED IN THE RHODESIAN PROCESS. GRENNAN MENTIONED THAT HE AND MINISTER OF STATE DAVID ENNALS WOULD SHORTLY VISIT LUSAKA FOR A FIRST-HAND AP-
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PRAISAL OF DETELOPMENTS, BUT THAT THE VISIT AND THE NKOMO-SMITH AGREEMENT ARE MERELY COINCIDENTAL. IN ANY EVENT, BRITAIL'S PRESENT POLICY TOWARDS RHODESIA IS CAREFULLY CONSIDERED, AND OFFICIALS HERE ARE RELUCTANT TO DO OR SAY ANYTHING THAT MIGHT BE CONSTRUED AS DRAMATICALLY INNOVATIVE. THEY ARE INCLINED TO WORK BEHIND THE SCENES. HAVING ALREADY BEEN PRICKED IN SMITH'S ROSE GARDEN, THE LABOR GOVERNMENT IN LONDON IS CAUTIOUS, AND PROBABLY WANTS SMITH COMMITTED TO AN IRREVERSIBLE PROCESS BEFORE AGAIN EXPOSINE ITS PRESTIGE TO RHODESIAN CUPIDITY.RICHARDSON

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